

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7977

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 5364

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, RO

SUBJ: ROMANIA WANTS TO GET INTO THE ACT

1. EVRON CAME TO SEE ME TODAY AT ALLON'S REQUEST TO GIVE ME THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION.

2. ISRAELI AMBASSADOR TO ROMANIA COHEN WAS SUMMONED BY FOREIGN MINISTER MACOVESCU TO HIS SUMMER VACATION RETREAT, EVIDENTLY ON AUGUST 9. MACOVESCU SAID HE WANTED TO PASS ON TO THE AMBASSADOR HIS VIEWS ON THE MIDDLE EASTERN SITUATION. THIS SUBJECT HAD PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE TALKS BETWEEN PRESIDENTS FORD AND CEAUSESCU. IN THOSE CONVERSATIONS, CEAUSESCU HAD MAINTAINED THAT THE SITUATION WAS GETTING WORSE, ALTHOUGH AMONG THE ARABS, PARTICULARLY THE EGYPTIANS AND SYRIANS, THERE WAS A READINESS TO MOVE TOWARD PEACE. HOWEVER, THE OPPORTUNITY THAT SADAT AND ASAD HAD AND THEIR ROOM FOR MANEUVER WERE LIMITED AND GETTING MORE SO. THE ARABS WERE PREPARING FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. STEPS MUST THEREFORE BE TAKEN TO REACH SOME AGREEMENT DURING AUGUST; ISRAEL MUST BE PERSUADED TO SHOW GREATER FLEXIBILITY.

3. MACOVESCU MAINTAINED THAT THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY KISSINGER WERE IN GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH THIS ASSESSMENT. THEY HAD POINTED OUT THAT THE U.S. WAS STILL IN THE PROCESS OF REASSESSMENT BUT THAT WOULD SOON BE OVER. IN THE MEANTIME, THE U.S. WAS ENERGETICALLY INVOLVED IN FINDING AT LEAST A PARTIAL

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SOLUTION PRIOR TO THE GA, BUT NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE GA. TO THIS CEAUSESCU HAD REPLIED THAT EGYPT, SYRIA AND JORDAN HAD GIVEN PROOF OF THEIR MODERATION BUT PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE

HAD TO BE ONE STEP AT A TIME. THE ROMANIANS HOPE THAT THE PRESENT U.S. EFFORTS WOULD SOON BE CROWNED WITH SUCCESS.

4. MACOVESCU HAD ADDED THAT IN THE MIDDLE EAST "GREAT FORCES" ARE PLAYING A ROLE, EVEN THOUGH AT THE MOMENT ONE DOES NOT NOTICE THEM. (THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR ASSUMED THIS WAS A REFERENCE TO THE SOVIETS.) A CONTINUATION OF THE PRESENT SITUATION COULD LEAD TO WAR, WITH ALL ITS CONSEQUENCES.

5. MACOVESCU HAD THEN EXPLAINED WHY ROMANIA FELT IT HAD TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN THE SEARCH FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE. EVEN IF WAR DID NOT BREAK OUT, THE SITUATION WOULD ONLY WORSEN AND WOULD LEAD TO THE STATIONING OF FOREIGN FORCES IN THE AREA. HE SAID THAT THE ISRAELIS COULD HANDLE THE PRESENT (UNSPECIFIED) FORCES THERE, BUT WHEN OTHER FORCES (AGAIN THOUGHT TO BE A REFERENCE TO THE SOVIETS) ARRIVED, THEY COULD BRING DISASTER.

6. AFTER THIS LENGTHY PREFACE, MACOVESCU THEN GOT TO THE REASON FOR SUMMONING COHEN. HE SAID THAT ROMANIA WAS CONSTANTLY ACTIVE AND INTERESTED IN FINDING A SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT. IT HAD HAD EXCHANGES OF VIEWS WITH MANY COUNTRIES, INCLUDING AUSTRIA, MEXICO, VENEZUELA, BRAZIL AND SENEGAL. ROMANIA AND COUNTRIES LIKE THESE, WHO HAVE CONTACTS WITH BOTH PARTIES AND HAVE A MODERATE VIEWPOINT, ARE INTERESTED IN OFFERING THEIR GOOD OFFICES IN ORDER TO GET THE PARTIES TOGETHER AND FIND A SOLUTION. THE BEST THEY COULD HOPE FOR NOW WOULD BE A PARTIAL SOLUTION, BUT IT SHOULD BE ACHIEVED BEFORE THE REGULAR GA CONVENES. SUCH A PARTIAL SOLUTION COULD PAVE THE WAY FOR A PEACE BASED ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES AND THE RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL.

7. AMBASSADOR COEHN HAD RESPONDED THAT HE COULD NOT REACT TO THIS PROPOSAL WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS. HE DID ASK WHETHER MASOVESCU WAS TALKING ABOUT A CLOSED GROUP OF COUNTRIES OR AN OPEN GROUP WHICH OTHERS COULD JOIN. MACOVESCU HAD REPLIED THAT THE LATTER WAS CORRECT. COHEN HAD NOTED THAT THE U.S.'S EFFORTS SEEMED TO BE PROVING FRUITFUL AND THAT THERE WAS A CHANCE FOR AN AGREEMENT. WHY NOT LET THIS EFFORT BE CARRIED

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TO A CONCLUSION BEFORE OFFERING GOOD OFFICES? MACOVESCU SAID THERE WERE THREE REASONS: (A) NOTHING HAS YET BEEN SIGNED BETWEEN THE PARTIES; (B) THE AGREEMENT BEING DISCUSSED IS ONLY WITH EGYPT; AND (C) IT WAS NOT GOOD TO HAVE ONLY THE SUPER POWERS INVOLVED. (THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR HAD CONCLUDED THAT THE THIRD REASON WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT.) SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED COUNTRIES SHOULD ACT IN PARALLEL WITH THE SUPER POWERS: "YOU DO NOT REALIZE HOW SERIOUS THE SITUATION IS GETTING". THE WORLD HAS NOT ACCEPTED ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF TERRITORY SINCE 1967. ISRAEL'S ORIGINAL DEMAND TO DO AWAY WITH THE STATE OF BELLIGERENCY CANNOT BE ACCEPTED. ROMANIA APPEALED TO ISRAEL TO

SHOW GREATER FLEXIBILITY.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 5364

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8. ON AUGUST 13 ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR TO ISRAEL COVACI HAD ASKED TO SEE ALLON WITH AN URGENT MESSAGE FROM MACOVESCU. WHEN DELIVERED, THIS MESSAGE PROVED TO BE SIMILAR TO WHAT MACOVESCU HAD PREVIOUSLY TOLD ISRAELI AMBASSADOR COEHN BUT, ALLON NOTED, HAD LACKED THE HINT OF THE SOVIET THREAT IN THE AREA WHICH MACOVESCU HAD CONVEYED ORALLY. ALLON ASKED WHETHER THE ROMANIANS HAD ALSO APPROACHED THE ARABS WITH A GOOD OFFICES OFFER. THE ANSWER WAS IN THE NEGATIVE, WITH THE OBLIQUE COMMENT THE THE INITIATIVE WAS OPEN FOR OTHR COUTNRIES TO JOIN IN.

9. ALLON SAID THAT HE APPRECIATED MACOVESCU'S GOOD INTENTIONS. HE TOLD THE ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR THAT ISRAEL HAD DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ALL THE COUNTRIES NAMED, EXCEPT SENEGAL, AND NONE HAD MADE ANY APPROACH OF THIS SORT. IN FACT, LENGTH CONVERSATIONS HERE LAST WEEK, PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA OF MEXICO HAD NOT EVEN HINTED AT A GOOD OFFICES OFFER. FURTHERMORE, SADAT HAD REJECTED THE MEXICAN SUGGESTION FOR AN EGYPTIAN/ISRAELI MEETING AT ANY LEVEL.

10. ALLON STATED THAT ISRAEL HAD NO INTENTION OF DRIVING A WEDGE BETWEEN THE ARAB STATES, ALTHOUGH IT IS AWARE THAT THE PLO HAS DIFFERENCES WITH SOME OF THE OTHER ARABS. ROMANIA SEEMS TO BE THE ONLY COUNTRY WHICH TAKES THE PLO SERIOUSLY; OTHERS OTHERS MERELY PAY LIP SERVICE. HE POINTED OUT THAT ISRAEL HAD HAD THREE ROUNDS OF TALKS WITH THE ARABS SINCE 1948. NO ARAB COUNTRY HAD DEMANDED A COLLECTIVE NEGOTIATION BUT, IF THEY HAD ISRAEL WOULD HAVE REJECTED IT. NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT TODAY DO NOT MEAN THAT ISRAEL WILL NOT ALSO NEGOTIATE WITH SYRIA. IN FACT,

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IT HAS EXPRESSED TO THE U.S. ITS WILLINGNESS TO DO SO.

11. ALLON CONTINUED THAT EGYPT AND ISRAEL HAD AGREED TO THE U.S. ACTING AS MEDIATOR. DR KISSINGER HAD BEEN INFORMED BY BOTH THAT HIS TRAVEL TO THE AREA WAS ACCEPTABLE WHENEVER HE BELIEVED IT WOULD LEAD TO A MEANINGFUL RESULT. THEREFORE, HIS EFFORTS SHOULD BE GIVEN EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED. PRESIDENT FORD'S INITIATIVES WITH DADAT AND RABIN AND DR KISSINGER'S EXTENSIVE ACTIVITY SOON MAY BE CROWNED WITH SUCCESS. THERE WERE NO SIGNS OF AN Y DANGER OF A MILITARY-FLARE-UP IN THE AREA IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THIS SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN TO MEAN THAT ISRAEL WILL NOT CONTINUE DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS TOWARD PEACE; IT WILL.

12. ALLON TOLD THE ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR THAT THERE WAS NOT YET GENERAL AGREEMENT WHEN THE GENEVA CONFERENCE SHOULD BE RECONVENED. HE THOUGHT, HOWEVER, THAT WHEN IT ID RECONVENE, IT SHOULD CONSIST OF THE PRESENT GROUPING AND SHOULD NOT BE TURNED INTO A MINIATURE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. HE THOUGHT THE BEST THING THAT COUNTRIES FRIENDLY TO ISRAEL COULD NOW DO WOULD BE TO ENCOURAGE THE ARABS TO BE MODERATE AND TO TOAKE UP CONTACT WITH THE ISRAELIS. DR KISSINGER IS THE RIGHT MAN FOR THE JOB OF MEDIATION NOW AND THE ROMANIANS SHOULD WAIT FOR THE CONCLUSION OF HIS PRESENT NEGOTIATIONS SINCE THE INTERVENTION OF ADDITIONAL COUNTRIES AT PRESENT IS INADVISABLE.

13. EVRON AND I BRIEFLY DISCUSSED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS ROMANIAN APPROACH. WE BOTH THOUGH IT WAS LIKELY DUE TO THEIR DESIRE TO PALLY A LARGER ROLE ON THE WORLD STAGE AND WE WERE SKEPTICAL OF THEIR ABILITY TO LINE UP OTHER COUNTRIES IN ANY FORM OF A GOOD OFFICES BLOC. EVRON SUSPECTED THAT THE PLO, OR ROMANIA'S ARAB FRIENDS, MAY HAVE STIMULATED THE INITIATIVE. EVRON SAID HE PLANNED TO SEND A MESSAGE ON THIS SUBJECT TO THE ISRAELI EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON SOONEST.
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